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DDI- 03105-85

20 JUN 1985

17 June 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: John L. Helgerson
Director of African and Latin American Analysis

SUBJECT: Insurgent Threat In Colombia

1. As I mentioned to you during our recent conversation with Assistant Secretary-designate Elliott Abrams, we share General Williams' concerns about the deteriorating situation in Colombia. Last month we published an Intelligence Assessment on Colombia's troubles that I attach for your use and suggest you forward to General Williams. I am also attaching our most recent current intelligence piece on Colombia's declining ability to deal with the insurgent threat. [REDACTED]

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2. We do not believe that the guerrillas are strong enough to topple the government in the near term, but we worry that a continuation of current trends over time would be regime threatening. The guerrillas are taking advantage of the cease-fire to re-arm and recruit, while severe budget cuts are reducing the military's counterinsurgency capability. In three major confrontations over the last 10 months, however, most recently in southwestern Colombia near Cali, the military has prevailed. Fragmentary reporting suggests Cuba and Nicaragua may be stepping up support to the insurgents through increased training and an intensified effort to promote guerrilla unity. The largest insurgent group--the pro-Soviet Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia--has used its long-standing ties with narcotics traffickers to help fund and transport arms purchases from abroad. and the traffickers are seeking similar relations with the M-19.

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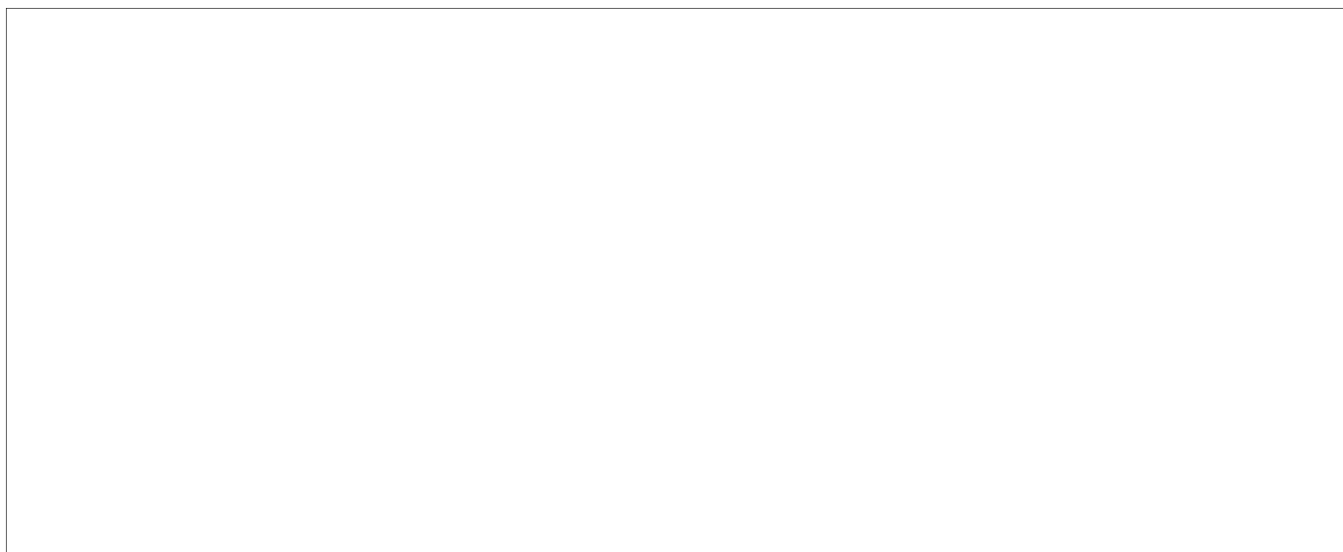
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 John L. Helgerson)

Attachments:

- A. Correspondence and Pub to D/DIA
- B. Current Intelligence Item

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